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Community development groups: A solution to conflict in western Montana

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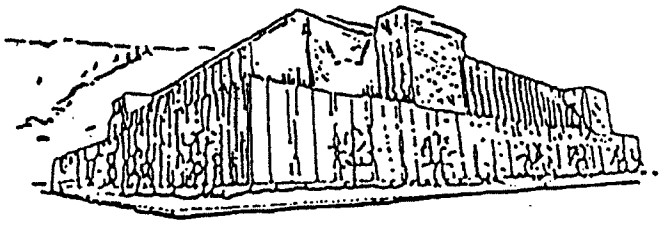

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS: A SOLUTION TO CONFLICT IN WESTERN MONTANA

by

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Western Montana has undergone a multitude of changes in recent years. Like many of the Rocky Mountain West states, Montana has experienced unprecedented growth and development. Newcomers to the state bring with them value systems that sometimes conflict with existing ones. Growth has resulted in changes upon the landscape too, as homes replace open space. In addition, the state is changing from an extractive-based economy to more of an amenities-based economy; communities once dependent upon logging now struggle with attempts to diversify their economy. Increased demands for natural resources has stretched the limits of multiple use.

Because of these changes, many places in western Montana are experiencing conflict that has pitted neighbor against neighbor, and citizen against government. Polarization over issues is often the result. In an attempt to resolve this conflict and address changes, some communities in western Montana have organized community development groups. These are grassroots organizations whose mission is to *improve and/or sustain the economic, social, and environmental viability of the community and its surrounding area*. They offer people with differing interests the opportunity to meet and discuss the issues that affect their community.

The objective of this study was to examine the formation, operation, and potential success and failure of CDGs in western Montana. To accomplish this task, the researcher interviewed community development group leaders to determine: 1)the issues that led to CDG formation; 2)how they defined membership, conducted meetings and made decisions; 3)the kinds of networking they used; 4)the funding they received; and 5)the accomplishments they had made. In addition, the researcher surveyed CDG members to develop a demographic profile, and to obtain a member's perspective on the success of CDGs.

Acknowledgments

I am forever grateful to the many people that helped me with this thesis. I owe thanks beyond words to Dave Jackson, who served as my advisor, committee chair, mentor, and friend. In the three long years it has taken to complete this project Dave was a constant source of guidance. I was also fortunate to have Dan Doyle and Alan McQuillan on my committee. Dan provided me with much needed advice on how to construct and carry out a survey. Alan, besides being a fine traveling companion to Japan, opened the doors to this project and provided valuable insight along the way. I am also greatly indebted to Mr. Akira Yamaguchi of Hokkaido, Japan for funding this project. Mr Yamaguchi founded a sustainable wood home manufacturing company, Kinoshiro Taisetsu Co., and the International Ecodevelopment Institute in Hokkaido, Japan. Mr. Yamaguchi has demonstrated his desire to pursue sustainable development and the protection of nature at both a global and local scale. Lastly, a huge thank you goes to my family for their unconditional support while I've been in graduate school.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the men and women in this study who generously gave me their time and thoughts. They are to be commended for their tireless efforts to improve communities in western Montana.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table: Page:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS:

A SOLUTION TO CONFLICT IN WESTERN MONTANA

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....

"Most of the problems of man involve social change in one way or another....almost any kind of change produces problems if for no other reason than it represents a deviation from that [to] which one is accustomed."

- Nelson L. et al 1966

As western Montana faces unprecedented growth and change, there appears to be a growing desire to preserve the identity and culture of communities, while at the same time pursuing economic prosperity. Conflict, whether it is over management of natural resources or changing value systems, has embroiled many communities and pitted neighbor against neighbor and citizen against government. In apparent frustration over past efforts to resolve conflict, grassroots level community development groups have formed in some communities. These groups offer people of differing interests the opportunity to meet and discuss issues that affect their communities. Some of these groups are formally

structured, while others are loose knit organizations. These groups share a common interest in bettering the welfare of the community and the surrounding area. For this thesis I studied ten such groups in western Montana, focusing on their formation, operation, and potential success and failure.

Conflicts Facing Western Montana

Rapid population growth and the changes associated with it, are some of the largest challenges facing communities in western Montana. Increasing numbers of Americans are choosing to live near pristine areas. Newcomers migrate to the west for its scenic beauty, good schools, recreation, low cost housing, and to find a sense of community (Andrews, 1992).

According to U.S. Census Bureau figures, in the nine counties where the community development groups in this study were located, population increase from 1990 to 1995 was as high as 28.9% (Ravalli County). Between 1980 and 1990 the 20 counties surrounding Yellowstone National Park grew at a faster rate than any state in the nation (Corporation for Northern Rockies, 1994). Most in-migration is in the more populous urban counties, particularly those in western Montana (Wallwork, 1996). According to Paul Polzin, Director of the Bureau of Business and

Economic Research in Montana, net migration into Montana is expected to decrease from its early 1990s' pace, and then increase again after the turn of the century (Polzin, 1996).

The demographics of Montana are changing with the in-migration of people. Newcomers tend to be younger and have more formal education than the average person living here (Reichert, 1996; Wallwork, 1996). There are more males than females moving to the state (Wallwork, 1996), and newcomers' household incomes tend to be lower than that of the average resident (Reichert, 1996; Wallwork, 1996).

With increased growth comes problems, including overcrowded schools, traffic, air pollution, rising housing costs, and overflowing landfills (Smith, 1994). Population increase, both nationally and statewide, also results in a greater demand for Montana's agricultural and other natural resource products (Polzin, 1996).

Dan Kemmis, past mayor of Missoula, Montana, says, " On the one hand we find ourselves living in paradise. We cannot imagine any place we would rather be. But as word gets out about how well life can work out here, we become increasingly concerned about what will happen if thousands more come" (Missoulian, May 14, 1992).

Social conflict arises from growth as well; new people enter the community and bring with them different value systems and cultural backgrounds. Due to increased tourism, many western Montana communities, like other communities throughout the western United States, are experiencing an evolution from traditional small town America to "citified" resort towns. Ringholz (1992, p.13), refers to "the growth that is changing the American West today - a growth spawned by floundering mining and agriculture economies turning to tourism as a salvation, and manifested in progressive urbanization of once-rural communities and commercialization of the outdoors." Ringholz concludes that growth threatens to destroy the "unique personalities of our western towns". The situation is complicated by "western individualists - old-timers and newcomers alike - white knuckling their causes" (Ringholz, 1992). Those communities still deeply entrenched in extractive industries, such as logging and mining, are unlikely to welcome the change to a recreation/tourism based economy. Not only does the switch result in a loss of identity for traditional workers, but the new jobs are likely to pay less, as well (Bates, 1993).

Communities become embroiled in controversy over how to handle growth issues. As early as 1980, and increasingly so in

the '90s, communities in Montana have been divided over land use issues. Public meetings to discuss land use planning often result in considerable controversy (Jones, 1980; Johnson, 1980; and Smith, 1995).

Growth is just one of many issues facing rural communities. Because of the large amount of public land, the west for a long time has been closely tied to the federal government (Jones, 1996). The economic well-being of western communities often centers around activities, both extractive and amenity based, that take place on public lands (Bates, 1993). According to Bates, "in many instances, public land communities have suffered from cycles of 'boom and bust' because their economies have revolved around production of a single resource such as gold, oil, or timber." Communities that suddenly acquire resource-based industries, such as mining, can experience rapid population growth as well, which sometimes results in social disruptions, pathological behaviors, and cultural conflicts (Summers and Branch, 1984).

Logging and mining activities are a continuing source of conflict for many Montana communities. Timber companies, environmentalists, the U.S. Forest Service, and concerned citizens are involved in debates over clearcutting, the salvage

rider, and endangered species management. (Associated Press, 1994; Devlin, 1995; Woodruff, 1987). Mining is a contentious topic as well. The proposed New World Mine near Cook City (since withdrawn) sparked one of the most heated environmental debates in years (Iwanski, 1994). The proposed gold mine in Lincoln, Montana is another example of conflicting interests (Associated Press, 1995).

Another source of problems and conflict in Montana is the livestock production industry. Baquet (1996) concludes that livestock prices in 1994 were lower than in previous years due to record production at the national level. Prices in 1995 were even lower than in 1994 with the decline expected to continue into 1997 before they increase again (Baquet, 1996).

The growth issue affects the livestock industry as well. Western Montana land prices have skyrocketed, mainly due to out-of-state buyers willing to pay more than the agricultural value of the land (Backus, 1995). Jim Peterson, executive vice-president of the Montana Stock Growers Association, states that the wildlife and open spaces that people are moving to this state for, are often dependent upon the existence of ranches. Escalating land values can result in a reduction in agriculture land base when subdivisions replace ranches (Backus, 1995).

In summary, western Montana is experiencing many changes. The immigration of people to this area has resulted in changes in the landscape as well as changes in value systems. The state is no longer as reliant on extractive industries for its livelihood, and the amenities and service industries are increasingly important. These changes have resulted in considerable conflict and polarization for communities.

The objective of this chapter was to describe the social and economic climate of western Montana, and to point out that the changes taking place have caused considerable conflict. This information will be useful later in the thesis to explain why CDGs were formed in western Montana.

In the next chapter I will define the terms "community development group" and "community". I will also review the literature on why community development groups are started, how they operate, who is involved, and what contributes to CDGs success.

CHAPTER TWO: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS - ONE SOLUTION TO CONFLICT.....

Definitions

I use the term "community development group" (CDG) to describe an organization whose mission is *to improve and/or sustain the economic, social, and environmental viability of the community and its surrounding region*. In other words, a CDG is a problem-solving group dedicated to enhancing the well being of the community and its surroundings. To understand the definition of a CDG it is useful to also define the term community. According to the literature, there are numerous definitions for community. Hillery (1955) observes, however, that there is a basic agreement among the definitions that a community consists of a set of socially interacting people within a geographic area who share one or more additional common ties. In other words, community refers to both a place and its people. Place can refer to a watershed, a county, or a neighborhood, as long as there is social interaction among its members and they have common ties.

Wilkinson concludes that rural communities have an advantage over urban areas in terms of community development; with smaller numbers of people in a rural setting, there are fewer problems

with communication, coordination, and integration. This factor of scale, then, influences where community development groups will arise. They are less likely to form or be effective in larger communities.

Wilkinson (1979) argues that communities have an intrinsic value in social well-being as well as a problem solving function. This may be what community development groups are referring to when they express a desire to build community spirit. In other words, community instills a sense of pride in belonging, and a common bond between members.

Communities in western Montana, like many other places in the West, are very concerned with public land issues. Bates (1993), concludes that human settlements in the west often depend upon the land and resources that are adjacent to them for economic well being, whether it be for extractive-type commodity production or amenity-dependent recreational uses.

Formation, Function and Membership

So far in this chapter, I have defined the terms CDG and community. To further understand the definition of a CDG, I want to review some of the literature on why CDGs are formed, how they function, and who is involved.

There is considerable evidence that community development groups arise in response to some sort of social or economic crisis (Perry, 1987; Ravitz, 1982). Warner and Monk (1979) conclude that citizens will often form CDGs to address concerns that can be more effectively dealt with in a group setting. Furthermore, Crowfoot and Wondolleck (1990, p.2) find that "citizen organizations - those focused on the environment and natural resources - organize when people become dissatisfied with the decisions and values of government, business, and other interest groups."

Generally speaking, the activities of a community development group can be described as "*community development work*". This is a local process of people trying to strengthen the community. It involves opening and maintaining channels of communication between groups, and developing cooperation (Wilkinson, 1979).

In recent years, much of the community development work in the West has centered around collaborative efforts and consensus building. The consensus building process involves stakeholders in resolving disputes without imposing one group's views or authority over those of another (Montana Consensus Council, 1995). This is an alternative to relying upon a third-party to

make decisions, such as elected officials, civil servants, or the courts. Jones (1996) observes that stakeholders from special interest groups are often frustrated with past attempts to resolve conflict using the third-party system, a system which has often led to further gridlock and polarization over issues. As a result, some stakeholders are trying new ways to resolve conflict, such as the consensus process.

The more familiar method used for conducting meetings and making decisions is based on Robert's Rules of Order, in which there are chairpersons, points of order, old and new business, motions, and voting rules (Doyle and Straus, 1976). Robert's Rules originated in British Parliament in the 19th Century, and are commonly used in formal meetings and government. However, Doyle and Straus argue that the formality of Robert's Rules is not well suited for collaborative problem solving, particularly when dealing with complex issues.

Crowfoot and Wondolleck (1990) observe that most of the participants in citizen groups, such as a community development group, are volunteers. A survey of the literature on volunteerism (Luloff, et. al. 1984) concludes that people with higher income, higher levels of education, and higher employment status occupations are more likely to volunteer. People of the

middle age bracket (40-59) are also more likely to volunteer, and the average volunteer serves for either personal prestige motives or community service motives (Luloff, et. al. 1984).

Factors Important to Success

Crowfoot and Wondolleck (1990) examine citizen group involvement in environmental conflict resolution and identify factors important to the success of organizations involved in collaborative problem solving efforts. They note that, (1) all stakeholders involved in a conflict must be identified and represented, and (2), it is critical to maintain member support and continuity. The authors observe that most participants in citizen groups are not paid for their efforts and often contribute more time to the group than desirable. They suggest that the use of support staff, such as lawyers, researchers, and administrators, can ease the burden on overworked volunteers.

Crowfoot and Wondolleck also conclude that special training in dispute resolution, or the use of a trained facilitator can be advantageous to the meetings of an organization. This was supported by case studies in which participants noted that the presence of a facilitator was a pivotal point in the process.

Networking, or the exchange of information between people or between groups, is also identified by Crowfoot and Wondolleck as

an important criteria for the success of citizens groups. Networking enables groups to maintain communication between different citizen interests, as well as acquire expertise on matters pertinent to the group.

Funding is another critical component to citizen groups involved in dispute resolution. Funding is necessary for support staff, meeting costs, research, and publicity.

In summary, this chapter points out that community development groups are usually created in response to some sort of conflict or crisis. Additionally, CDGs usually function following one of two ways: the consensus building process or Robert's Rules of Order. CDG members are usually volunteers, and tend to have higher than average levels of income, education, and job status. Several factors are important determinants of CDG success. These included stakeholder representation, member support, dispute resolution training, networking, and availability of funding.

In the next chapter I will explain my reason for studying CDGs in western Montana, state the objectives for this study, and explain the methodology used to achieve its objectives.

CHAPTER THREE: PROBLEM STATEMENT, OBJECTIVES AND METHODS.....

The Problem

While searching for a thesis topic that would contribute to a better understanding of sustainable community development, I attended the meetings of two community development groups. At these meetings I observed certain qualities from each group that I thought would be beneficial to the other group. I hypothesized that these two groups could benefit from exchanging information. After investigating the matter, I learned that there was no information exchange between the two groups, and it also appeared that the two groups were not exchanging information with other CDGs either.

Discussions with leaders from these two groups led me to believe that CDGs in western Montana could benefit from learning more about other CDGs in terms of why groups were formed, how they operated, and how they were funded. Likewise, it was apparent that little information was available concerning the success or failure of these groups.

The Objectives

Due to the apparent lack of information about CDGs, my first objective for this study was to provide a detailed description on the formation and operation of CDGs in western Montana. To accomplish this objective I proposed the following critical questions:

1. What were the issues that lead to the formation of CDGs?
2. What were the major problems facing CDGs?
3. How did CDGs define membership?
4. How did CDGs conduct meetings and make decisions?
5. Were CDGs networking, and if so, with whom?
6. Where did CDGs receive funding, and how was it spent?
7. What were the demographics of CDG members?
8. How much time did members contribute to CDGs?

My second objective was to determine what attributes contributed to the potential success and failure of CDGs. I wanted to produce a list of characteristics, or traits, that would directly benefit other CDGs interested in learning how to be successful.

The Methods

CDG Selection

The first task in the study was to develop a list of active CDGs in western Montana. This was a difficult task for two reasons. First, groups did not necessarily call themselves CDGs. Instead they referred to themselves as community councils, development corporations, or community forums. It was up to me, therefore, to determine if a group matched my definition of a CDG. The other reason why CDG selection was difficult stemmed from the first reason. Because CDG is a loose term that describes several types of groups, there is no directory to consult. Instead I had to identify potential groups by soliciting organization names from county officials, chamber of commerce presidents, school principals, and other people likely to be involved in community development work. I described to these people what a CDG was, and asked them if they knew of a group that matched the description. The 1994 Montana Business Assistance and Community Development Directory was consulted as well.

After identifying a potential CDG, a preliminary phone interview with a key member was conducted to select groups whose missions matched my definition of a CDG (an organization whose

mission is to improve and/or sustain the economic, social, and environmental viability of the community and its surrounding region). This was a difficult phase in the study because it required a careful, yet somewhat subjective, evaluation of mission statements to determine whether a group was appropriate. This process yielded a list of 10 CDGs that met the needs of this study.

Interviews

To acquire an in-depth understanding, or description, of each community development group (objective number one), interviews were conducted with a key person from each group, someone who preferably had been with the group since it's conception. In some cases, this person was the leader of the group, in other cases it was a well- informed member. A standardized form, or interview guide, was used to guide the interview process (refer to Appendix A). A tape recorder was used to record each interview and the tapes later transcribed into notes.

Written Surveys

In addition, a standardized written survey (Appendix B) was distributed to the CDG members present at a meeting of their group in order to obtain their perspective on CDGs in western Montana. The written survey was used for accomplishing both objective one and two. The members received a survey packet that included: a cover letter that explained the study and provided instructions for completing and returning the survey; an anonymous survey; a pre-addressed and stamped return envelope; and a post card. The post card, to be returned separately from the survey, had a place for the respondent's name and group name; this was used to keep track of who had completed a survey. Those people that failed to return the survey were contacted by telephone.

The questions on the survey were arranged into four themes, and included seven open-ended and fourteen closed questions. Appropriate blanks were left for the open-ended questions, and for the closed-ended questions, respondents were asked to mark an X indicating their choice. A comment section was provided at the end.

The questions in the first section dealt with problems present in the respondent's community. The second section

addressed the success of the respondent's community development group. Section three contained questions about the respondent's involvement in the group, and the last section included personal questions about the respondent, such as age, gender, education, etc.

Defining Success

I formulated two approaches to determine what contributed to the success or failure of a CDG (objective two). Both of these approaches were revised as the study progressed.

1. success based on CDG attributes:

For the first approach I intended to examine the attributes/qualities of successful groups. For example, did all of the successful groups use Robert's Rules of Order to make decisions?

In order to do this, I first had to identify successful CDGs. I had planned to evaluate a CDG's success according to two criteria: one, how long the group had been in existence (longevity), and two, what the group had accomplished. I reasoned that the groups in my study that had survived significantly longer than the others (twice as many years or

more) had demonstrated their ability to survive. During the analysis phase of the study, I discovered a flaw in my methods for evaluating success, based on longevity. I should have compared the CDGs in my study to CDGs that had disbanded. It then would have been possible to identify the differences between survivors and non-survivors. Instead, my study was composed only of groups that were still functioning. Upon realizing my mistake, I decided to select the group in my study that had been around the longest and examine its attributes. In doing so I did not assume that it was necessarily more successful than the others, only that it was a group that had survived longer than any other CDG in my study.

Accomplishments was the second criterion I intended to use to gauge a group's success. In other words, I thought that a successful group would have a longer list of accomplishments than one that was less successful. During the analysis phase of my study I realized that CDGs listed several types of accomplishments, based on the kind of group they were. I discuss these types later in the paper. Because of the variation in types of accomplishments, I chose not to classify a CDG as successful based on what it had accomplished.

As a result of not being able to determine which groups were successful, based on longevity or accomplishments, I could not make correlations between success and group attributes.

2. success based on member perspectives:

The second approach I used to determine what contributed to CDG success was based on member perspective. Members were asked to list factors that contributed to the success and failure of their group. I also asked them to rate the overall success of their group. It was my intention to rank the CDGs according to which groups received a higher member evaluation. This would have enabled me to compare the attributes of the higher scoring CDGs to the attributes of the lower scoring ones. After analyzing the data, however, I realized that the number of respondents from each CDG varied significantly (there were only three respondents from two of the groups and as many as 22 from others). For this reason, I felt that the poorly represented CDGs would be disadvantaged in the ranking process, and therefore I chose not to make conclusions based on a member's evaluation of the group.

In summary, my methodology for identifying what contributes to CDG success was revised considerably, due to the complications listed above. I ended up focusing on the members' perspective of

what factors contribute to the success or failure of a CDG. In addition, I examined the attributes of the oldest CDG in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS.....

The Groups Selected

Ten groups met the criteria for a CDG. All were located in western Montana. Two were from areas where agriculture is the primary industry; two were in bedroom communities to a city of approximately 60,000 people; two were from timber communities; and four were from communities that have a mixture of tourism, agriculture, and timber. All of the communities had a population less than 5,000. (1990 US Census Bureau). The newest group in the study was nine months old; the oldest was seven years. The average age of the groups was 2.5 years. The following represents a summary of the 10 CDGs in this study.

Community Development Groups in study:

GROUP: Lincoln Community Council (LiCC)
TYPE: community council
SIZE: 6 council members
AGE: 3 years
ISSUE: a forum to discuss proposed mine and other issues
MISSION: community council is a method by which communities can provide leadership and is a forum to relay information from the community to the county commissioners

GROUP: Lolo Community Council (LoCC)
TYPE: community council
SIZE: 6 council persons
AGE: 3 years
ISSUE: concerns over growth
MISSION: purpose is to promote the interests and concerns of its citizens in Missoula County

GROUP: Friends of the Nine Mile (FNM)
TYPE: prelude to community council
SIZE: 6 - 8 organizers
AGE: 9 months
ISSUE: concerns over growth
MISSION: undeclared at time of study

GROUP: Bonner Development Group(BDG)
TYPE: community development corporation
SIZE: 6 executive committee members; 9 board of director members
AGE: apx. 18 months
ISSUE: offshoot of a pre-release center opposition group
MISSION: a pro-active organization of community residents who work cooperatively to promote the kinds of growth that will achieve a balance between the native beauty of our community environment and the commercial, residential, and industrial development that brings employment, prosperity, and infrastructure support

GROUP: Lake County Development Corporation (LCDC)
TYPE: community development corporation (county wide)
SIZE: 9 board members, 3.5 paid staff
AGE: 1 year (product of three community development corporations joining)
ISSUES: formed to revive local development corporations
MISSION: general mission is to be involved in community development in its broadest definition" and "serve the community at large

GROUP: Teton County Development Corporation (TCDC)
TYPE: community development corporation
SIZE: 3 - 5 members
AGE: 6 years
ISSUE: concern over business failures associated with depressed local agriculture economy
MISSION: to promote the natural beauty and historic attractions along the Rocky Mountain Front so as to enhance recreational, educational, and economic opportunities for all; and, to create or improve job opportunities in the area while preserving our renewable resources and our agriculture heritage - the beauty - the spirit of the land and its people

GROUP: Bitterrooters for Planning (BFP)
TYPE: land use planning group
SIZE: 15 - 18 people
AGE: 2 years
ISSUE: concern over unplanned growth
MISSION: we are an informal network of people who share a conviction that we must plan for a beautiful future in the (county) or that beauty and pleasant lifestyle will incrementally fade into unsightliness, and environmental and social problems, and the purpose of (this group) is to encourage understanding of, clarification of, and support for, a comprehensive land use plan for (the county)

GROUP: Mineral County Community Foundation (MCCF)
TYPE: community forum
SIZE: elected officers; apx. 40 attenders
AGE: 15 months
ISSUE: reaction to mill closure
MISSION: to promote ecologically and economically sustainable development of human and natural resources, and to improve the social and economic wellness of (the county)

GROUP: Beaverhead County Community Forum (BCCF)
TYPE: community forum
SIZE: 24 members
AGE: 15 months
ISSUE: concerns over growth and public land management
MISSION: to build agreement among individuals and groups with diverse viewpoints on land use and growth management activities in (the county)".

GROUP: Swan Valley Citizens' ad hoc Committee (SVCC)
TYPE: community forum
SIZE: no formal membership; apx. 25 regular attenders
AGE: 7 years
ISSUE: concern over natural resource issues and growth
MISSION: mandate states that "because of increasing concern over the declining natural resource base in the (valley), this ad hoc group of citizens has a self-imposed mandate to: address the economic, environmental, and cultural problems related to the decline; suggest to

> the full community possible remedies that maintain or enhance economic livelihood and the quality of life in the (valley)

For organizational purposes, I categorized the CDGs according to how each group selected its members and conducted meetings. There were three community councils, three development corporations, one land use planning group, and three community forums. The differences between the types of groups were subtle, a fact demonstrated by the similarity of their mission statements.

A community council, made up of elected officers, works closely with county officials and serves as the voice of the community, particularly in rural communities that are not incorporated and have no community government.

The development corporations were oriented towards commerce and economic growth. In general, they were more formally structured than the other CDGs.

The community forums were usually less structured, and dealt more with natural resource issues.

The land use planning group in the study had a more focused agenda than the other groups, although it still addressed many of the same issues. Its mission was also similar to the other CDGs.

The members from seven of the CDGs were given a written survey; three of the ten groups did not participate in the written survey: two were recently established and as a result felt they had incomplete information to provide (FNM, MCCF); the other group not surveyed (TCDC) had no membership beyond those people who were represented in the oral interview. Ninety six written surveys were handed out at the meetings of the seven participating groups. Fifty four people responded, for a 56 percent response rate.(See appendix B for copy of survey)

A Description of CDGs

The following section addresses the critical questions proposed under objective one, which was to describe the formation, operation, and member profile of CDGs in western Montana.

Question 1. What were the issues that led to the formation of CDGs?

The results of the oral interviews showed that conflict was indeed the impetus for CDG formation in western Montana. Nine out of the ten groups interviewed were formed in reaction to some type of issue or controversy. The exception was the LCDC, a county wide development corporation that was created when three

community development groups banded together to form an umbrella organization (Table 1).

Table 1. Reasons for CDG formation

Group:	Primary reason(s) for formation:
Lincoln Community Council.....	conflict over proposed gold mine
Lolo Community Council.....	growth / development
Friends of the Nine Mile.....	growth / development
Bonner Development Group.....	proposed correctional center
Lake County Dev. Corp.....	merger of three CDGs into one
Teton County Dev. Corp.....	business closures, depressed economy
Bitterrooters for Planning.....	growth / development
Mineral County Comm. Forum.....	closure of timber mill
Beaverhead County Comm. Forum....	growth / development, public land conflicts
Swan Valley Citizens' Committee..	growth / development, public land conflicts

Five of the community groups in the study were created to address the issue of population growth and development in their area. Not surprisingly, one of these five groups (BFP) was located in Ravalli County, which is the fastest growing county in Montana (U.S. Census Data). Two of the groups (FNM, LoCC) were located in communities close to the city of Missoula. These two groups feared that urban sprawl from Missoula would take over their communities. All five of these groups were dealing with outdated land use plans that were created by county government prior to the recent surge in population growth.

The LiCC was formed primarily due to controversy over a proposed gold mine. Besides the "jobs versus the environment"

debate, citizens were concerned that the mine could result in a population change from 2,000 to 5,000 people, and that they needed to plan in advance for such an increase.

One group (MCCF) was created in response to the closure of a timber mill in which 160 people lost their jobs. Another CDG (TCDC) was formed to address the issue of business closures in the community due to a depressed agricultural economy.

A proposal to build a pre-release correctional center prompted citizens in one community to join together. The BDG formed as an off-shoot of this pre-release center opposition group.

The idea for the BCCF came about at a public meeting concerning management of public land in the area. The meeting was arranged by members of a multi-agency government task force that had signed a memorandum of understanding for managing public lands in the area. The task force suggested forming a CDG in order to keep the public involved in public land decisions.

Question 2. What were the major problems facing CDGs?

Participants in the written survey were asked to rate a series of problems on a scale, ranging from very serious to not serious at all. (See Table 2)

Table 2. Community Problems

Problem:	Very Serious	Somewhat Serious	Not Very Serious	Not Serious At All	Unsure
Lack of good employment opportunities	**19 (35.2%)**	**31 (57.4%)**	4 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Lack of quality health care	5 (9.3%)	11 (20.4%)	**18 (33.3%)**	**20 (37%)**	0 (0%)
Lack of strategy for dealing with rapid population increase	**26 (48.1%)**	**21 (38.9%)**	6 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)
Inability of local work force to find affordable housing	12 (22.2%)	**22 (40.7%)**	**16 (29.6%)**	4 (7.4%)	0 (0%)
Rapid conversion of open space into developed conditions	**21 (38.9%)**	**16 (29.6%)**	13 (24.1%)	4 (7.4%)	0 (0%)
Rising property taxes	**20 (37.0%)**	**24 (44.4%)**	8 (14.8%)	2 (3.7%)	0 (0%)
Insufficient natural resource base for employment opportunities	9 (16.7%)	**11 (20.4%)**	**21 (38.9%)**	9 (16.7%)	4 (7.4%)
Insufficient natural resource base for recreational opportunities	3 (5.6%)	6 (11.1%)	**13 (24.1%)**	**32 (59.3%)**	0 (0%)

Table 3. Most serious problem

Problem:	Frequency:	apx.%
1. Growth, development, etc.	26	48.1
2. Lack of jobs, unemployment, etc.	7	13.0
3. Tax issues	4	7.4
4. Environment, natural resource issues	2	3.7
5. Business failures, business recruitment	2	3.7
6. Lack of available housing	2	3.7
7. Community apathy	2	3.7
8. Government intrusion, too much government	1	1.9
9. Other problems*	5	9.3
Missing data	3	5.5
Totals:	54	100

* Some of the members responded with answers that I was unable to code or interpret; these were classified as "other"

Respondents were also asked to name the most serious problem or issue facing their community. Their answers were coded according to themes. (See Table 3)

The results indicated that growth and its related topics was considered the leading problem facing members of western Montana CDGs. Twenty six out of 52 people indicated that growth was the number one problem in their community. Similarly, 47 out of 54 people indicated that a "lack of strategy for dealing with rapid population increase" was a very serious or somewhat serious problem in their community. Thirty seven out of 54 felt that the "rapid conversion of open space to developed conditions" was a very serious or somewhat serious problem. Associated with growth was "rising property taxes"; 44 out of 54 indicated this as a very serious or somewhat serious problem.

Lack of quality jobs, or unemployment was also a serious problem for many people, which reflects the decline of the traditional economic base in western Montana. Fifty out of 54 people felt that "lack of good employment opportunities" was a very serious or somewhat serious problem in their community. Seven people thought that unemployment or lack of good jobs was most important problem in the community.

The CDG members' perception of the problems facing their communities was congruent with the major changes that have

occurred in western Montana. They listed growth and the lack of good employment opportunities as the two major problems in their communities, which reflects the immigration of people to the region, as well as the decline of the extractive industries.

Question 3. How did CDGs define membership?

Membership is important for a group dealing with community conflict because it determines who is involved in a given issue. Likewise, the presence or absence of officers (president, chair, etc.) will influence how a CDG operates. Based upon the interviews, it became clear that approaches to group membership varied among the CDGs examined. (See Table 4.)

The manner in which a CDG defined membership depended on the type of group it was. In the community councils, six members were elected by the community and one was chosen by the county government. The council members then voted among themselves to select a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer, plus two or three non-titled positions. Sometimes there was financial compensation for secretarial services, but generally there was no pay for being a council member.

Table 4. How CDGs selected members

Group:	Method for selecting members:
1. LiCC	six members elected by community; one chosen by county; officers elected by members
2. LoCC	same as above
3. FNM	plan to hold elections in near (not yet future fully established)
4. BDG	members volunteer; democratic election of board members and executive committee
5. LCCDC	paid staff hired by group; members volunteer; officers elected by members
6. TCDC	no organized membership; one person directs group
7. BFP	membership limited to people who subscribe to purpose of group; members elect board of directors; board elects officers
8. MCCF	members volunteer, co-chairs direct group members elect board of directors
9. BCCF	members selected to represent special interest groups; membership restricted; no officers; facilitator present
10. SVCC	volunteer members; no regular officers; rotating co-chairs; facilitator present

All three of the development corporations handled membership differently. The BDG held annual public meetings at which members of the board of directors were elected. The board in turn elected an executive committee, which met on a regular basis. Non-board members were invited to attend periodic public meetings to exchange information with the board of directors.

The LCDC had a paid staff, including a director, a financial manager, and an administrative person. The rest of the people in the organization were volunteer representatives from several communities. According to the spokesperson for this development corporation, an advantage of having paid staff was that volunteers were not required to do any secretarial work; their purpose was to provide guidance only. The spokesperson thought that by having paid staff do the secretarial tasks, fund raising, and organizational duties, the volunteers could put their time and energy into generating ideas, and thus were less likely to wear out.

The other county development corporation in this study (TCDC) had no formal membership at all, nor did it have formal meetings. Instead the group was informally led by one person who relied on a core group of people to spearhead projects and committees. The spokesperson for this group felt they got more done by not having organized membership or meetings. This enabled them to focus more on tasks and not get bogged down with process. When the development corporation needed information from the community they held a public meeting.

The land use planning group in my study (BFP) went for a year without officers, then opted to elect them in order to become incorporated. The spokesperson for this group felt that

by assigning roles they were better able to distribute the work load. Membership was limited to people who subscribed to the mission of the organization.

There were three community forums in the study. The MCCF had two co-chairs, a treasurer, and a board of directors. All of these positions were elected. The BCCF was started by a small group of people who selected members, referred to as representatives, from the various special interest groups in the community (e.g. environment, agriculture, business). The representatives referred to people in the special interest groups as their constituents. What made this group unique was that after the group had recruited a diversity of members it discontinued any new memberships. Anyone was allowed to attend the meetings but no one could officially join unless they were selected to replace a retiring member. This group had no officers but relied upon a facilitator to guide its meetings.

The third community forum (SVCC) defined a member as anyone who showed up at meetings. This group had no permanent officers, with the exception of a treasurer. Instead, at each meeting, two people volunteered to co-chair the next meeting. A spokesperson for this group felt that by not having permanent officers they were able to avoid overworking the members. Everyone took turns

at being the leader, and no one person was stuck with all the work. This group was assisted by a facilitator as well.

Regardless of what method CDGs used to handle membership, it was unanimously agreed that it is very important for a group to involve all the pertinent stakeholders in an issue. The only exception to this was if a stakeholder was completely disruptive to the problem solving process. A stakeholder was defined as a person or group who had a particular interest or role in an issue. This could include special interest groups, municipalities, civic leaders, industry, and the general public. For most groups identifying and recruiting stakeholders was a continuous task.

Question 4. How did CDGs conduct meetings and make decisions?

How a group conducts its meetings and makes decisions influences its level of efficiency, and accordingly, its success. A group that has well organized meetings and a clear decision making process will require less time of its members. The success of a group is partially dependent upon its ability to make decisions that advance its mission or goals. Meeting styles also determine who is able to speak, and when. This is very important if all the stakeholders in a given issue are to be

represented in a fair manner. Just as membership among CDGs in this study varied, so did methods for conducting meetings. (See Table 5.)

Table 5. How CDGs conducted meetings and made decisions

Group:	Methods:
1. LiCC	Robert's Rules of Order
2. LoCC	Robert's Rules of Order
3. FNM	no established format (not yet fully established)
4. BDG	open discussion of issues; decisions made by majority vote
5. LCCDC	open discussion of issues; decisions made by majority vote
6. TCDC	no formal meetings; no official decision making process
7. BFP	open discussion of issues decisions made by majority vote
8. MCCF	Robert's Rules of Order
9. BCCF	consensus building process; facilitated meetings
10. SVCC	consensus building process; facilitated meetings

The two active community councils (LiCC, LoCC) conducted their meetings using Robert's Rules of Order. Robert's Rules involved following a mandated order of business and included a call to order, roll call, old and new business, public comment,

etc. Decisions were made by majority vote. The community council meetings were open to the public. One council member said they tried to keep the meetings as informal as possible so the public had ample opportunity for participation.

One CDG in the study (FNM) was still in the process of establishing itself as a community council. The group met on an "as needed" basis and had not yet developed a formal structure to its meetings.

Of the three development corporations, two had similar methods for conducting meetings (BDG, LCCDC). They held open discussions of the issues and followed a routine procedure. There had to be a majority of the group present or by proxy to transact business and decisions were made by a majority vote.

The third development corporation (TCDC) did not hold regular meetings and had no formal protocol. When necessary, this group met over lunch and discussed a particular project. A chairperson for the project would update the group, and the CDG in turn offered further guidance. The spokesperson for this group felt they accomplished more by avoiding time consuming formal meetings.

The development corporation with a paid staff (LCCDC) sent out meeting packets in advance, which included minutes from the

last meeting, an agenda, financial information, and any other information the group might want to take action on. At each meeting there was a volunteer, non-paid, chairperson. A member of the paid staff sat next to this person and coached him or her on the various topics that arose. Although not advertised, at alternate meetings they had a community update and all meetings were open to the public.

The meetings of the land use planning group (BFP) began with an educational program, followed by a regular business report. This group used a blackboard to record decisions, responsibilities, and task completion dates. The group made a concerted effort to ensure that no one person dominated a meeting. Some members of the group had received training in facilitating a meeting.

Of the three community forums, two relied on professional facilitators to guide their meetings (BCCF, SVCC). In both cases the facilitation service was free. One facilitator lived in the community and had a vested interest in the group. The other was provided free of charge by the Montana Consensus Council. These two community forums had similar meeting formats: the meetings followed a predetermined agenda and the facilitator helped the group process information. The facilitator also protected

members from being verbally attacked when they presented their views. Both facilitators used a flip chart at meetings to record what each member said. The basic meeting strategy for these two groups was to present information to the group and then collaboratively come to a unanimous decision or position regarding that information. Spokespersons for these two groups agreed that a facilitator was very beneficial to the process.

This study also examined the logistics of the CDG's meetings, i.e. agendas, location, time, length, and advertisement. Spokespersons for the groups felt these items influenced the outcome of meetings as well. The logistics for all of the CDGs were compiled and generalizations made according to themes.

Community development groups usually followed an agenda at meetings. In some cases it was set between meetings and mailed to members ahead of time; in other cases the agenda for an upcoming meeting was set at the previous meeting. Some groups advertised their agendas through the local t.v. station, radio, public bulletin board, newspaper, or newsletter.

Most community development groups held their meetings at the same time and place each month, thus avoiding confusion on when and where to meet. Spokespersons agreed that it helps to have a

neutral place to meet, such as a community hall or fire station, rather than at someone's home, or in a government facility. The more adversity there was within a group, the more important it was to meet in a neutral location.

How often a CDG met was an important issue. Most CDG leaders felt that if a group met too often there were high demands for time. On the other hand, infrequent meetings caused a loss in momentum. The majority of CDGs in this study met once a month, although committees and boards of directors sometimes met more frequently. Some spokespersons felt that meetings should be at night so as not to conflict with work schedules.

Some of the spokespersons felt that it was important to advertise meetings and events. Two of the CDGs produced a monthly newsletter that not only provided information on the activities of the group itself, but also included a variety of stories on community events, community history, as well as features on local residents.

Question 5. Were CDGs networking?

Networking, or the exchange of information between people or between groups, enables a group to acquire expertise on matters, as well as keep abreast of the issues in the community.

Likewise, networking helps a CDG spread information about itself to other people and organizations. All of the CDGs in this study networked at the community level. For example, they disseminated information about themselves to the rest of the community. CDG spokespersons agreed that it was very important for groups to network within the community in order to stay connected with the local issues.

Networking took place at the county level as well: all ten groups worked in various ways with the county government (e.g. county commissioners and county land planners). Three of the CDGs (LoCC, BCCF, SVCC) had someone from a county land planning office attend their meetings regularly.

Besides community and county level networking, the CDGs exchanged information at the regional, state, and national levels. For example, they communicated regularly with a number of state and federal government agencies, including: Montana Department of Commerce; Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Montana Department of Transportation; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Soil Conservation Service (Resource Conservation and Development); USDA - Forest Service (Rural Community Assistance); Bureau of Land Management; and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

There were only three CDGs that networked regularly with other CDGs. Two of these were community councils that consulted other community councils (LiCC, LoCC). The other was a county development corporation that was involved in an effort to form a tri-county development corporation (LCCDC).

Question 6. From where did CDGs receive funding?

Particularly important to the success of any organization is access to adequate resources which enable the organization to perform day to day operational tasks and complete special projects. The question arises then, how do groups obtain funding, and secondly, what do they spend it on?

This study examined the funding sources and expenditures for CDGs in western Montana. (See Table 6.) One source of revenue was dues. Two of the CDGs in this study required their members to pay dues. For one group (BDG) it was an annual fee per family. The other group (BFP) asked for a donation from members, which enabled them to vote. The spokesperson for this group felt that the dues instilled a sense of ownership and commitment to the group. Five of the CDGs received contributions or donations, from within and outside the groups. For example, the MCCF was the recipient of a sizeable donation from a Japanese wood

products business that was interested in sustainable development practices in hinterland regions of the northern hemisphere. MCCF placed the gift in a permanent endowment and will use the interest earned to finance community development projects. The BDG generated money through corporate sponsorships of $1,000 per company (BDG). Much of that money was used to produce a bi-monthly newsletter.

Grants were another source of revenue. Six of the CDGs received one or more grants. The Forest Service was the most frequent grant provider (4 groups). In some cases the county was the recipient of a grant and the CDG administered it. For example, the LCDC secured for the county a $350,000 Department of Commerce Community Block Grant. This money was placed in a revolving loan fund and has been used to finance projects in the community.

The two established community councils (LiCC, LoCC) received money from the county, which went towards elections, travel, advertising, office supplies, etc. The group that was attempting to form a community council (FNM) had no funding yet but intended to rely on donations rather than county funds.

A community festival and "fun run" was a source of revenue for the BDG. They not only raised money during these events, but

also increased awareness about the group and promoted community spirit.

CDGs used their resources in a variety of ways. Some money was spent on secretarial supplies and services, such as printing, newsletters, and phone bills. Money went toward salaries as well; two of the groups (LiCC, BCCF) used grant money to help pay for the services of a county planner. The county planner(s) helped the CDGs create or renew their community's comprehensive land plans. The LCCDC used grant money to fund three full time staff positions.

The largest expenditures occurred on major projects. Usually the county or municipality was the recipient of a grant and the CDG helped them administer the money. For example, Teton County received $69,000 from the state to build a tourist information center in Choteau. The TCDC was instrumental in overseeing this project. The LCCDC used a Rural Economic Development Grant, issued to the county, to establish a technical assistance center for small businesses.

Table 6. Funding: revenue sources and expenditures

Group:	Sources:	Expenditures:
1.LiCC	county government, Forest Service grant	travel, advertising elections, county planner=s salary
2.LoCC	county government	elections, phone calls, supplies
3.FNM	no funding yet,expenses paid out of pocket	start up costs
4.BDG	membership dues, corporate sponsorship, community festival and fun run	operational expenses, newsletter
5.LCCDC	Department of Commerce Community Block grant, Rural Economic Development grant, community contributions	business expansion, technical assistance community center for small businesses, paid staff
6.TCDC	Forest Service grants, State Department of Transportation, donations	start up costs, economic development projects , part-time economic development staff
7.BFP	Family Foundation grant, donations, dues	start up costs, secretarial expenses
8.MCCF	donations: endowment fund raising events	have yet to spend endowment
9.BCCF	Montana Consensus Council, Community Foundation, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management	operational expenses, county planner's salary
10.SVCC	Forest Service Grant, donations	economic diversification project, mailing list

Question 7. What were the demographics of CDG members?

The written survey was used to develop a demographic profile of CDG members. This profile was compared to census data collected for the state and was used to determine if CDG members were representative of the population at large. If a certain age or income bracket was missing, a CDG could make a special effort to recruit members in this area. Demographic data for the state came from the Missouri State Census Data Center and was recorded for Montana in 1990.

Age

Respondents were asked to record their age. (See Table 7)

Table 7. Age of CDG members

Age:

Mean = 44.67
Std. Dev. = 11.36
Minimum = 36
Maximum = 78
Missing data = 2 cases

The mean age for CDG members was 45. It was assumed by this researcher CDG members would be at least 18 years of age. The Montana Census Data for 1990 did not report a mean age for those people 18 years or older. However, the data did indicate that there were 576,278 people 18 years of age or older. Although not

a direct comparison, the mean age for CDG members (45) falls into the 45-54 age bracket, which composes 14.5% of the 18-plus population. Of those in the 18-plus age group, 55.6% were between 18 and 44, and 30.2% were 55 or older.

Gender

Respondents were also asked to record their gender. (See Table 8)

Table 8. Gender of CDG members

Gender:	Frequency	apx.%
1. Male	39	72.2
2. Female	14	25.9
Missing data	1	1.9
Totals	54	100

Census data indicated that females comprised 50.5% of the population in 1990. According to this figure, females were under-represented in CDGs in western Montana (25.9%).

Education

Respondents were asked what was the highest level of education they had completed. (See Table 9)

Table 9. Education of CDG members

Highest Level:	Frequency	apx.%
1. Attended grade school	0	0
2. Some high school	0	0
3. Graduated from high school	4	7.4
4. Some college or vo-tech after high school	9	16.7
5. Graduated from college	17	31.5
6. Advanced degree (M.S., Ph.D., etc.)	23	42.6
Missing data	1	1.9
Totals	54	100

According to this study, 74.1% of CDG members had graduated from college or received an advanced degree. The state data indicated that, of people twenty-five years and older in this state, 25.4% had graduated from college or received an advanced degree. All of the CDG members who answered this survey had at least graduated from high school, compared to 19% of the state population aged 25 and over that had not graduated from high school.

Residency

Respondents were asked how long they have lived in their community, which might indicate a person's familiarity with the local issues. (See Table 10)

Table 10. Time CDG members have lived in their community

Time:	
Mean	15.29 years
Std. Dev.	12.66
Minimum	0 (less than one year)
Maximum	51 years
Missing data	2 cases

The average time of residency was 15.29 years, which indicated that CDG members were not newcomers to the state. Although not computed in this study, this figure could be compared to community census data to get a comparison.

Occupational status

Respondents were asked about their occupational status. (See Table 11)

Table 11. Occupational status of CDG members

Status:	Frequency	apx.%
1. Employed	37	68.5
2. Retired	12	22.2
3. Homemaker	2	3.7
4. Currently unemployed	1	1.9
Missing data	2	3.7
Totals	54	100

Sixty-eight percent of the members surveyed were employed and 1.9% were unemployed. This was compared to the state unemployment figure of 7.0%. Twenty-two percent of the members were retired and 3.7% were homemakers.

Employment sector

Respondents were asked to indicate what economic sector they work(ed) in. (See Table 12)

Table 12. Occupation of CDG members

Sector:	Frequency:	apx.%
1. Other employment	12	22.2
2. Education	7	13
3. Finance, insurance, real estate	6	11.1
4. Public administration	5	9.3
5. Agriculture	4	7.4
6. Recreation/tourism	3	5.6
7. Mining	3	5.6
8. Health care	3	5.6
9. Retail trade	2	3.7
10. Manufacturing	2	3.7
11. Timber / wood products	2	3.7
12. Construction	1	1.9
13. Homemaking	1	1.9
14. Transportation	0	0
Missing data	3	5.6
Totals	54	100

The most frequent response regarding employment sector was "other", which suggested that the categories provided were not appropriate for the field that was surveyed. Of the 12 that checked "other", three were in consulting and three were in land or wildlife management. The rest of the "other" selections consisted of one person from each of the following occupations: commercial fishing, military engineering, environmental activism, law, economic development, and art. Education was the most frequent occupation, at 13%. Occupations in finance, insurance and real estate comprised 11.1% of the group. Public administration made up 9.3%. The blue-collar occupations of

agriculture, mining, manufacturing, timber/wood products, and construction comprised 22.3% of the members.

Annual income

Respondents were asked to report their approximate annual income. (See Table 13)

Table 13. Income of CDG members

Brackets:	Frequency	apx.%
1. Less than $5,000	1	1.9
2. $5,000 to $14,999	3	5.6
3. $15,000 to $24,999	6	11.1
4. $25,000 to $34,999	10	18.5
5. $35,000 to $44,999	8	14.8
6. $45,000 to $54,999	6	11.1
7. $55,000 to $64,999	6	11.1
8. $65,000 or more	10	18.5
Missing data	4	7.4
Totals	54	100

The median income for CDG members was the $35,000 to $44,999 bracket. Unfortunately the survey did not indicate whether this income was household income or per capita, and therefore it could not be accurately compared to state wide income data. There was a bimodal representation, with ten people in each of the $25,000 to $34,999 and the $65,000 or more bracket. State figures showed that the median household income in Montana was $22,988, and the per capita income was $11,213.

Question 8. How much time did members contribute to CDGs?

Members were asked about their participation in a CDG, as well as their reasons for joining or leaving a CDG. This information helped determine how active CDG members were and what factors influenced membership.

Length of membership

Respondents were asked how long they had been a member of their group in order to determine the median length of member involvement in CDGs. (See Table 14)

Table 14. Length of membership

Time:	Frequency	apx.%
1. Less than one year	6	11.1
2. One year	21	38.9
3. Two years	7	13.0
4. Three years	3	5.6
5. Four years	3	5.6
6. Five years	4	7.4
7. Six years	2	3.7
8. Twelve years	1	1.9
Missing data	7	13.0
Totals	54	100

The median length of time that members belonged to a rural community development group in this study was one year. Comparatively, the average age of the seven CDGs that participated in the written survey was 2.7 years. Twenty one percent have been a member for more than three years. One person

reported a longer length of membership than the age of their group. This person was probably a member of another group that evolved in to one of the study groups. In general, the CDGs in this study were relatively new organizations, which qualified the results of this study considerably.

Attendance

Respondents were asked about their attendance at meetings. This information helped determine the level of commitment members had to their CDG. (See Table 15)

Table 15. Attendance at Meetings

Attendance:	Frequency	apx.%
1. I attend all the meetings	29	53.7
2. I attend three out of four meetings	12	22.2
3. I attend half the meetings	6	11.1
4. I attend one out of four meetings	3	5.6
5. I rarely attend meetings	3	5.6
Missing data	1	1.8
Totals	54	100

More than half of the respondents indicated that they attended all of the meetings, and three quarters of them had an attendance record of 75% or better. This suggested that CDG members in western Montana are dedicated to their work.

Time

To further determine the level of commitment to their CDGs, members were instructed to mark how much time they spent per week on their group, not counting time spent in meetings. They had the option of filling in the blank (other) if the time exceeded six hours. (See Table 16)

Table 16. Time members spend working for CDG

Time:	Frequency	apx.%
1. None	3	5.6
2. Less than one hour	12	22.2
3. One or two hours	21	38.9
4. Three or four hours	8	14.8
5. Five or six hours	3	5.6
6. Seven hours	1	1.9
7. Nine hours	2	3.7
8. Fourteen hours	1	1.9
Missing data	3	5.6
Totals	54	100

The median time spent per week on CDGs, outside of meetings, was one to two hours. Only three people indicated that they spend no time at all on the CDG aside from meetings. The results of this question further supported the notion that CDG members are dedicated to their cause.

Other organizations

Respondents were asked how many other organizations they belonged to that dealt with the overall quality of the community. This

information indicated how civically oriented CDG members were, in addition to how busy they were. (See Table 17)

Table 17. Other Organizations

Amount:	Frequency	apx.%
1. None	17	31.5
2. One	16	29.6
3. Two	8	14.8
4. Three	10	18.5
5. Four or more	2	3.7
Missing data	1	1.9
Totals	54	100

The results of this question supported the notion that the typical volunteer in community development groups was committed to helping the community: sixty two percent of those surveyed belonged to one or more other organizations.

Potential Success and Failure of CDGs

1. Evaluation of success based on CDG longevity

Two of the groups in this study had been around six or more years (TCDC-6yr; SVCC-7yr). The rest were three or less years old. I examined the SVCC for attributes that might have contributed to its success (longevity). I chose not to use the TCDC for this phase of the study because its members did not

participate in the written survey. In choosing the SVCC, I did not assume that it was necessarily more successful than the other nine groups, only that it had demonstrated survivorship capabilities.

The Swan Valley Citizen's ad hoc Committee (SVCC) was approximately seven years of age. Like many of the other groups in this study, SVCC was formed due to concerns over growth and development, as well as interest in public land management. This CDG had no officers and its members rotated co-chair responsibility for each meeting. The SVCC was a big advocate of involving as many stakeholders as possible and emphasized member recruitment. The group used a volunteer facilitator from the community to assist with meetings and made decisions based on consensus.

I examined the results of the written survey, looking for reasons why the members of the SVCC thought their group was successful. Eleven members were surveyed from this CDG. Out of a possible 33 reasons for the success of the group (up to three per person), 22 were given (six reasons were not coded and there were five blanks). The most frequently given reasons (10) for success fell into the category of "group process and trust". This referred to the group's ability to run successful meetings,

communicate effectively, and interact in a positive manner. The presence of a facilitator was mentioned three times, and the key words "consensus", "trust", "communication", and "listening", were all mentioned at least once. One of the members reported that the SVCC was successful due to its ability to "debate issues in a non-hostile environment". Another SVCC member wrote, "everyone feels free to put forth ideas without being attacked". It was apparent from this group's answers that there was a unique atmosphere present at their meetings that allowed members with differing opinions to work collaboratively with each other.

The second most frequently given reason (8) for the success of the SVCC was the dedication, quality and diversity of its members. Clearly these attributes contributed to "group process and trust". It would be difficult to scientifically measure the impact on success the members had in the SVCC, but based on observations of their meetings, I felt that the quality of the members played a tremendous role in their ability to survive for seven years.

2. Evaluation of success based on accomplishments

The study was designed to measure the success of a CDG based on its accomplishments. It was thought that the groups could be ranked according to the number of accomplishments they had made.

A problem emerged in this phase of the study that prevented me from measuring success based on accomplishments. When I designed the study, I assumed that CDGs would list only tangible (visible) accomplishments. In actuality, CDG spokespersons listed three different types of accomplishments: 1) "local power" accomplishments, meaning the degree of influence on local decision making a CDG had acquired; 2) tangible accomplishments, such as a visitor center; and 3) inter-personal accomplishments, like "building a high level of trust between members". The type of accomplishment(s) a group achieved often depended upon the function of the group. The SVCC, BCCF, and BFP, for example, acted in more of an advisory capacity and were not as involved with "on the ground" projects. Instead they were more interested in influencing the local decision making authorities. Both the BCCF and the SVCC had built strong relationships with state and federal land management agencies. The evidence suggested that these CDGs believed they were able to influence local land issues, and that the land management agencies were anxious to incorporate the ideas of community based groups. For example, the BCCF, based on public comments, created a vision document for the Pioneer mountains, which the Forest Service intends to incorporate into the forest plan. The SVCC spent considerable

time working on the Elk Creek - Squeezer Creek land exchange proposal and advised the Forest Service of its findings. The BFP had close ties to county level government and was influential in the local land planning efforts.

Even those groups involved with more tangible projects played more of an advisory role, rather than actually performing the tasks themselves. The LCCDC, for example, directed the building of a visitor center but was not involved with the "hands on" construction. The BDG was involved in an on-going effort to build a riverside park and was very influential on the construction design of a Town Pump gas station in the community. The BDG helped ensure that the Town Pump, which was to be built in a high profile location, was constructed in a manner that was aesthetically pleasing to the community.

The community councils in the study played an advisory role to the county commissioners and were involved in several tangible projects. The LoCC, for example, convinced the county to require a land developer to pay $10,000 for improvement of park lands in the community. This group was also very involved with a county planner in updating the land use plan for the community. Likewise, the LiCC has advised the county commissioners concerning development and zoning, and was involved with updating

a land use plan and a community assessment. Both the LiCC and the LoCC oversaw efforts to build a pedestrian walkway and bike trail through their communities.

How long a CDG had been around influenced the accomplishments they had achieved as well. Because some of the groups were recently formed, they had less to report in the way of tangible accomplishments. For example, the FNM was still in the process of becoming a community council and had yet to undertake any major projects. They had, however, completed a community survey in order to prepare for upcoming work. The MCCF was a new CDG too and was still establishing its function in the community.

A third type of accomplishment mentioned several times by CDG members and spokespersons was the inter-personal progress they had made. Respondents were proud of the relationships they had developed with people who held conflicting viewpoints. The BFP, for example, met every two weeks with a group that was opposed to planning efforts. Many CDGs considered it a major accomplishment to have created an organization where people with opposing views could rationally develop strategies for solving problems. Along these lines, CDG members often mentioned increased community spirit as an accomplishment.

Because of the emergence of three different types of accomplishments, I felt it unwise to label a CDG as successful or unsuccessful based solely on its accomplishments. For this reason I did not look for correlations between attributes and success in this phase of the study.

3. Evaluation of success based on members' perception

The closest I came to identifying what attributes or factors contributed to the success or failure of CDGs (collectively) was through interpretations of members' perceptions. As previously mentioned, I did not analyze individual groups in this phase of the study: the member sample size for each group was too small to make valid conclusions.

Overall success

Members were asked to rate the success of their CDG. They were to do so by indicating how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements concerning their CDG.(See Table 19)

Table 18. Success of CDGs

Statement: This group is very successful in dealing with the community's problems

	Frequency:	Apx. %
Strongly Agree	7	13
Agree	19	35.2
Unsure	20	37
Disagree	7	13
Strongly Disagree	1	1.9
Totals	54	100

Statement: This group is very successful in representing a diversity of ideas in the community

	Frequency:	Apx. %
Strongly Agree	12	22.2
Agree	28	51.9
Unsure	9	16.7
Disagree	4	7.4
Strongly Disagree	1	1.9
Totals	54	100

Statement: This group is very successful in influencing local government

	Frequency:	Apx. %
Strongly Agree	7	13
Agree	15	27.8
Unsure	26	48.1
Disagree	6	11.1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Totals	54	100

Statement: This group has a well defined mission or vision statement

	Frequency:	Apx. %
Strongly Agree	18	33.3
Agree	24	44.4
Unsure	7	13.0
Disagree	5	9.3
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Totals	54	100

Statement: This group has a clear decision making process for accomplishing tasks

	Frequency:	Apx. %
Strongly Agree	13	24.1
Agree	24	44.4
Unsure	13	24.1
Disagree	4	7.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Totals	54	100

Statement: Personally I think this group does a good job

	Frequency:	Apx. %
Strongly Agree	14	25.9
Agree	28	51.9
Unsure	6	11.1
Disagree	6	11.1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Totals	54	100

The results of this question did not clearly indicate how successful CDGs were overall. Forty-eight percent strongly agreed or agreed that their CDG was very successful in dealing with the community's problems, but 49 percent unsure or disagreed with this statement. CDGs were rated better at

representing a diversity of ideas in the community; 74 percent strongly agreed or agreed. CDGs also fared better on the statement, "Personally I think this group does a good job". Seventy-eight percent strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, and 22 percent were unsure or disagreed.

Reasons for success

In order to identify what attributes contributed to the success of a CDG, members were asked to name the three most important reasons why their group was successful in accomplishing its goals. The results were coded according to themes. If all 54 respondents gave three reasons there would be 162 reasons total. In actuality, 128 reasons were recorded: some people responded with less than three reasons and some gave none at all. One hundred and sixteen of the answers were sorted into themes; there were 12 answers that I was unable to interpret and these were coded as "other". (See Table 19)

Table 19. Reasons for success of CDG

Reason:	Frequency	%
1. Dedication of members, qualification of members	30	23.4
2. Group process, trust among members	30	23.4
3. Diversity of members	10	7.8
4. Dedication of leaders	9	7.0
5. Well defined mission and goals	8	6.3
6. Members committed to helping the community	7	5.5
7. Community uses group, group linked to community	7	5.5
8. Support from county, networking with the county	6	4.7
9. Support from other services, networking with govt.	3	2.3
10. Neutrality of the group	3	2.3
11. Paid staff	2	1.6
12. Support from the community	1	.8
13. Other reasons	12	9.4
Totals:	128	100

The results suggested that the dedication of members, or quality of members, was the biggest reason for the success of a group (chosen 30 times). This was supported in the interviews as well, which indicated that in order to form a group, and to sustain a group, it was important to have energetic, hardworking volunteers. Group process, or group trust (an element of group process), was also identified as an important reason for the success of a group (chosen 30 times). The term "group process" referred to the inter-personal dynamics of a group, how well the

members got along and how well they conducted meetings. Dedication of leaders was the third most frequent reason chosen (10), followed by well defined mission and goals. Interestingly, community support was reported only once as a reason for success. In the next section, community apathy was identified as the most frequent reason a group was not successful. Although some reasons for success were reported more often than others, the entire list of reasons should be considered when evaluating CDGs.

Reasons not successful

Members were also asked to name the three most important reasons why their community group was not successful in accomplishing its goals (See Table 20.) This information will help CDGs determine what attributes hinder success. There were 109 reasons given. I was unable to interpret eleven of these and coded them as "other".

The results indicated that community apathy, or lack of community support was the most common reason why a group was not successful. The time required of volunteers was identified as the second most frequent reason why a group was not successful; more simply put, members "burn out". The presence of a strong

Table 20. Reasons CDG was not successful

Reason:	Frequency:	Apx. %
1. Community apathy, lack of community support	17	15.6
2. Members overworked, takes too much time, too few people	12	11
3. Strong opposition group exists	12	11
4. Inexperience of group	7	6.4
5. Poor group process	7	6.4
6. Lack of member ability	7	6.4
7. Too much talk, not enough action	6	5.6
	5	4.6
9. Lack of diversity of members	5	4.6
10. Mission needs improvement, need to focus more	5	4.6
11. Lack of support from county and other govt. agencies	5	4.6
12. Group doesn't advertise enough	4	3.7
13. Lack of paid staff	3	2.8
14. Lack of power to make decisions	2	1.8
15. Too much government involvement	1	.9
16. Other reasons	11	10
Totals	109	100

opposition group was reported twelve times as a reason for CDG failure. This was mostly due to the presence of a highly vocal anti-planning group based in the same community as the BFP group.

Reasons for joining

To understand why someone might become involved in a CDG, members were given a list of possible reasons why they may have joined

their community group. Members were instructed to check all the reasons that were important for them. Knowing why members joined a CDG may help groups elsewhere recruit and sustain members. (See Table 21)

Table 21. Reasons members had for joining a CDG

Reason:	Frequency	Apx.%
1. To improve the welfare of the community in general	44	32.8
2. Concern for the environment	37	27.6
3. To solve a specific problem or accomplish specific task	33	24.6
4. For personal reasons, e.g. friendship, praise, self esteem	8	6.0
5. Other reasons	12	9.0
Totals	134	100

The most frequent reason people chose for joining their CDG was to improve the welfare of the community. The second most frequent reason selected was concern for the environment, followed by a desire to solve a specific problem, then "other", and lastly, personal reasons. If they chose "other" there was a space given for them to write in a reason. "Other" was chosen by members twelve times. Two of these "other" reasons for joining were a desire to maintain current lifestyles in the community.

Two members who checked "other" wrote that the reason they joined was because they were invited. The rest of the "other" reasons given were either too vague or incomprehensible to the researcher.

Most important reason for joining

Members were instructed to select one of the reasons in question 8 as the most important reason they had for joining a CDG. This was an attempt to narrow down the factors that might cause a person to get involved. (See Table 22)

Table 22. Most important reason members had for joining a CDG

Reason:	Frequency	Apx. %
1. To improve the welfare of the community in general	15	27.8
2. To solve a specific problem or accomplish specific task	12	22.2
3. Concern for the environment	7	13
4. For personal reasons, e.g. friendship, praise, self esteem	0	0
5. Other reasons	9	16.7
Missing data	11	20.4
Totals:	54	100

Forty-three people selected a most important reason for joining their CDG. Fifteen of them felt that the number one reason they had for joining was "to improve the welfare of the community in general", supporting the results of question eight.

The second most frequent reason selected was to solve a specific problem or task. Those that selected "other" as the number one reason gave reasons that the researcher was not able to code. No one reported that the number one reason they joined a CDG was for personal reasons.

Reasons for leaving

Respondents were given a list of possible reasons why someone might leave a community group. They were instructed to mark all the reasons why they might leave their own group, or indicate that they would not leave their group. This question helped identify why a CDG might fail to survive. (See Table 23)

Table 23. Reasons why someone might leave their CDG

Reasons:	Frequency:	Apx. %
1. Group doesn't accomplish its goals	20	26.3
2. It requires too much time	20	26.3
3. I disagree with the mission or vision of this group	8	10.5
4. Lack of good leadership	7	9.2
5. Lack of interest	6	7.9
6. Personality conflicts with group members	4	5.3
7. There isn't enough money to operate with	3	3.9
8. Other reasons	8	10.5
Totals:	76	100

The most frequent reasons given for leaving was if the CDG did not accomplish its goals, and the time required. Eight times people selected "other". Two of these eight "other" reasons were if the group became too political or bureaucratic. Lack of community support was identified as a reason too, along with cost of administration and insensitivity to new members.

Most important reason for leaving

Respondents were asked to choose from question 12 the most important reason why they might leave their community development group. (See Table 24)

Table 24. Most important reason for leaving

Reasons:	Frequency:	Apx. %
1. Group does not accomplish its goals	12	22.2
2. It requires too much time	5	9.25
3. I disagree with the mission or vision of this group	1	1.9
4. Lack of interest	0	0
5. There isn't enough money to operate with	0	0
6. Lack of good leadership	0	0
7. Personality conflicts with other group members	0	0
8. Other reasons	3	5.6
Missing data	33	61.2
Totals:	54	100

Thirty-three of the 54 respondents failed to select a most important reason for leaving. Of the 21 that did respond, 12 indicated that the most important reason they would leave their CDG was if the group failed to accomplish its goals, which supported the results of question 12. "Other reasons" was selected three times, which meant that the member wrote in a reason for leaving. I was not able to place these responses into the other given reasons.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION .....

Why Groups Form

The literature on community development groups concludes that there is usually some sort of economic, social, or environmental conflict preceding community development work. The results of this research project supported that conclusion. All of the CDGs in this study were created to address particular issues or broader conflicts. The most common source of conflict identified by CDGs was rapid community growth resulting from immigration to western Montana. Four of the ten groups formed directly in response to growth issues. All of the groups recognized that the changes associated with growth were going to continue to have a tremendous impact on their communities. In most cases, CDGs were taking proactive measures to address the growth issue. This included updating or creating land-use plans and working with county land planners.

In addition, CDGs were formed as a result of economic decline. Members worried about employment opportunities in their community, and the conflict associated with the decrease in extractive industries.

The results suggest that if communities continue to experience rapid growth and a decline in the vitality of their

traditional economic bases, conflicts will continue to arise. As a result, there will probably be a continued need for CDGs in western Montana.

Membership

Approaches to CDG membership varied greatly in this study and no technique stood out as being significantly more successful than another. The results of the study indicate that it was very important for CDGs to have a broad representation of stakeholders if they were to effectively address community problems.

Like other volunteer organizations, the CDGs examined in this study experienced problems with member commitment. Group leaders expressed concerns that members were often over-worked and as a result had lost momentum. Similarly, CDG leaders felt it was usually a core group of people who did most of the work. Interestingly, member commitment was identified in the written survey as the main reason for the success of CDGs. The results of this study indicate that further research on community development groups should examine ways in which CDGs can recruit more members and decrease work loads.

Meetings

There appeared to be two styles of conducting meetings and making decisions, although the differences were not always clear.

One style followed a more traditional format using Robert's Rules of Order and majority vote. The community councils and development corporations tended to use this approach.

The other style used for conducting meetings was the consensus building process. Decisions were reached when members agreed, or agreed not to disagree. Groups using this technique often had a facilitator present at meetings.

I was unable to attend a meeting of every group and therefore was not able to accurately assess the advantages of one style versus the other. Conclusions, therefore, were based on the perceptions of the members themselves. Again, the differences between the two styles were minor and this study was not able to conclude that one style was significantly better than the other. It did appear, however, that facilitators helped a CDG be more efficient at meetings, which in turn could affect its success. Although not quantified, it also appeared that facilitator-assisted groups had developed strong interpersonal relationships, which might influence a group's longevity.

Networking

The results of this study showed that CDGs in western Montana networked regularly at the community and county levels.

With growth being such an important issue in western Montana it was significant that CDGs were working closely with county planners in developing land-use plans. In many cases the county government offices had an "open door relationship" with the CDGs and information and services were readily exchanged.

The study indicated that CDGs were also networking with the various state and federal agencies, such as Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and the U.S. Forest Service. Generally speaking, the CDGs acquired information as they needed it and were well informed on the issues.

Interestingly, few of the CDGs networked regularly with other CDGs. This was surprising since many of the CDGs were working on similar issues and might have benefitted from each others experiences. While investigating the CDGs, I observed that each group had something of value that could be shared with the other groups, whether it was a particular idea for raising funds or a technique for holding successful meetings.

Funding

Because the objectives of each CDG varied, so did their needs for funding. In some cases the only expenditures were for office expenses, such as printing costs or phone bills. These expenses were often absorbed out of pocket by the members. Those groups that participated in major projects sought additional resources through donations, grants, and fund raising events. Because of the additional work involved with applying for grants, those groups that had paid staff, or a member who in the realm of their job could work on grant applications, had an advantage.

In-kind services were used by CDGs as well. For example, the Montana Consensus Council provided a facilitator for one group, and in another instance a professional facilitator from the community provided his services free of charge. Several groups were able to use copying and printing services at the county government offices.

Demographics

CDG members in western Montana were much like volunteers elsewhere; they tended to be middle aged professionals, and had above average incomes and education. Females, people below age 35, and lower income groups were under-represented in the CDGs,

based on comparisons to state-wide demographic data. Future research should compare CDG profiles to community level demographic data to determine if there is accurate representation.

Member Participation

This study determined that most people joined CDGs in order to help their community. This sense of civic duty was further demonstrated by the amount of time members devoted to the cause. In general, CDG members were dedicated to their group, spent time outside of meetings working on projects, and were often members of other community groups as well.

Not surprisingly, time constraints were identified as the biggest reason why people might leave a CDG. This further demonstrated the need for groups to be as efficient as possible and aware of member "burnout" risk.

Evaluating Success

Measures of CDG success included group longevity and group accomplishments. My goals were 1) to determine which groups were successful, and 2) to examine the attributes of those groups. In terms of longevity, one group was selected for its ability to survive an extended period of time (seven years). The results suggested that the main reasons for the success of this group were the quality of its members, and their "group process", or interpersonal skills. This environment of trust and ability to

communicate freely appeared to be aided greatly by the presence of a facilitator at the meetings.

Efforts to determine a CDG's success based on its tangible accomplishments were less successful. This was mainly due to the emergence of two other types of accomplishments: 1) a group's ability to influence the local decision making authorities; and 2) a group's ability to reduce tension between opposing interests. It appeared that an important accomplishment was a CDG's ability to foster more trusting relationships between interest holders and establish a dialogue for the community. Collectively these accomplishments indicated a growing sense of community.

In terms of the members' perspectives, dedication of members and trust were identified as the most important reasons for the success of CDGs. Lack of community support and time constraints were identified as the major obstacles to success. It appeared that CDGs could benefit greatly from more community involvement. This would increase public awareness of the group, as well as help recruit new members to ease the work load of existing members. For example, the BDG was interested in raising funds as well as promoting recognition of their group and increasing community spirit. Their answer was to hold an annual fun run and community picnic.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....

My objectives for this thesis were: 1) to examine the formation, operation, and demographics of CDGs in western Montana; and 2), to identify what attributes contributed to their potential success and failure.

I produced a clear picture on why groups were formed, different approaches to operating a CDG, and a profile of CDG members. This information should be of value to CDGs interested in learning about other CDGs, and possibly prevent them from "re-inventing the wheel".

The results indicated that CDGs were networking regularly with decision making authorities, such as the county commissioners, and land management agencies. They were not, however, networking between themselves. I felt this was an area that CDGs should improve upon. Communities and CDGs in western Montana shared many of the same problems, thus it seemed obvious that they should coordinate efforts.

The other observation I made concerning networking was that all of the CDGs were interested in acquiring information/ technical assistance, but the methods for acquiring this information varied -- CDGs employed different information

gathering techniques and used different sources. Based on this observation, I hypothesized that a regional telecommunication network would be of advantage to community development work in Montana. An interactive web site, for example, could be used to store information on funding, facilitation workshops, or community development projects. This information could be provided and updated by the users themselves, or by other organizations or agencies that provide support to community development work.

The idea of a regional telecommunication network is not new. I discovered that the Corporation for the Northern Rockies, a non-profit organization based in Livingston, MT, was interested in developing a Regional Communication Network and Information Clearinghouse to help communities locate sources of information and to communicate with one another -- essentially the conclusion that I made concerning the CDGs in my study. An offshoot of my study would be to examine the Communication Network to determine if it was being used by CDGs, and how effective it was.

The second objective of my thesis was to learn what attributes contributed to the potential success and failure of a CDG. As mentioned in the results section, I was unable to determine which CDGs were successful, which prevented me from

making correlations between success and attributes. The difficulty was in my measurement and definition of success. I originally assumed that CDG success was defined by a group's ability to survive over time (longevity), and its ability to accomplish tangible projects. I learned, however, that in order to measure a CDGs success based on survivorship, it was necessary to have data on CDGs that did not survive (group mortality). This would have enabled me to conclude that one CDG survived while another one did not. Comparisons could then be made between survivors and non-survivors.

The other component of my definition of success, tangible accomplishments, was flawed as well. By definition, the term CDG encompassed a variety of organizations. While they shared a common vision (community sustainability), their objectives varied. This difference in objectives explained the emergence of two other types of accomplishments besides the tangible ones: local power, and interpersonal accomplishments. Because there were several kinds of accomplishments, I was unable to conclude that one CDG had accomplished more than the others, and therefore was more successful than the others. Without a list of successful groups I was not able to make correlations between success and attributes. While this was a disappointment, the study gave me a better understanding of the definition of

success.

In summary, I learned that there are three ways to measure CDG success. The first was survivorship: a CDG was successful if it survived over time. Second, a CDG was successful if it accomplished its goals. That meant that the group had completed tangible projects or influenced the decision making process. The third measure of success was whether CDGs had developed a trusting atmosphere where people of differing values could enter in to a dialogue over important community issues. It appeared that community spirit was an offshoot, or product, of releasing the tension over issues.

While longevity and accomplishments provided insight into measuring success, the group members' survey responses produced a list of CDG attributes that they felt contributed to success or failure. The biggest factor that contributed to CDG success was the quality of the members and leaders themselves. In general, CDG members and leaders were energetic and civic-minded volunteers who cared greatly about the future of their communities. They were willing and able to devote both their time and energy to CDGs, as well as other organizations in the community. It appeared that if CDGs were to fail, it would largely be due to: 1) members becoming disenchanted with the

progress of their group, 2) members losing momentum because of the time the group requires of them, 3) failure of the group to recruit enough stakeholders, or 4) failure to maintain leadership.

The emergence of the importance of leadership and member quality was an interesting discovery. My original hypothesis was that the success of a group was largely determined by how they held meetings and defined membership. The question arises now, are leadership and member quality the key determinants of CDG success, rather than meeting style or membership? Further research should investigate this matter. Possibly the most efficiently run groups, in the absence of good leadership, will still fail. Likewise, it may be possible that groups with good leadership will survive regardless of how they run meetings or define membership.

In summary, my study proved to be more of a case study, rather than a quantitative analysis. It did, however, provide an in-depth description of CDGs and a members' perspective on success. I also believe the study will be of use for further research on CDGs. As an outgrowth of this study, several new research questions arise.

1. Will a CDG emerge if there is no crisis present?
2. Will a CDG disappear when the crisis is over and conflict dissipates?
3. Should the role of group leadership be considered a paramount factor in CDG success?
4. What are the attributes of a "quality member"?

In conclusion, community development groups appear to be a bright star for the future of Montana. In face of unprecedented growth and change, CDGs are an excellent opportunity to voice and address the concerns of the community. CDGs offer communities a chance to take a proactive role in shaping the future of western Montana.

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APPENDIX A. Oral interview guide

The University of Montana
School of Forestry
SURVEY OF RURAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

GROUP NAME_____

INTRODUCTION

* Overview of project:
As my letter to you mentioned, the objective of this study is to gain a better understanding on how grassroots community groups in western MT operate. From this interviewI hope to learn what attributes have contributed to the success of your group, as well as any obstacles that have inhibited success.

I'd like to start the interview by asking you to give me a brief description of your group. What is the purpose of this organization?

Part A. FORMATION OF GROUP

* How long has your group been in existence?

* Do you know how it got started?
* If yes:
  * Do you know of any obstacles the group encountered in starting? (lack of interest, lack of funding, lack of meeting facility, lack of leadership)

  * How did the group overcome those obstacles?

  * What advice would you offer others interested in starting a community development group?

Part B. MEMBERSHIP

* What is your title or role in this organization?

* Were you elected? volunteer?

* Are you paid?

* What are your responsibilities?

* What other roles are there in this organization?

* How are they selected?

* What are their responsibilities?

* Are any of them paid?
  *If yes:
    * full time?
    * part time?

* How many members are there in your organization? ____

* Is there a mailing list? (ask for copy)

* Do the members pay dues?
  * If yes:
    * How much are the dues?

    * How often do they pay the dues?

* Do you feel the various interest groups of this community and the surrounding region are represented in this group?

Part C. MEETINGS

* Describe how your organization conducts a typical meeting (the order of events, etc.)?

* Do you keep minutes of the meeting? (ask for copy)

* Is there a facilitator or mediator present at the meetings?

  * If yes:
    * Is this beneficial?

* Do you use any visual aids, such as chalk boards, flip charts, or tape recorder?

* Is there a pre-determined agenda for each meeting?

* Is it handed out before the meetings? at the meetings?

* Is there a designated time limit for each topic?

* Who decides the order of events at a meeting?

* What does this group do that really helps the organization of the meetings?

* Are there any problems in the organization of meetings?

* How often does your group meet? (daily, weekly, monthly)

* Do you have a regular meeting place?

* Are your meetings open to the public?

* How do you advertise your meetings?

Part D. MISSION STATEMENT AND BYLAWS

* Does this group have a "mission statement" ? (ask for copy)

* If yes:
  * How closely does this organization follow the mission statement?

  * Is it helpful to have a mission statement?

* If no (no mission statement):
  * How do you guide this organization?

* Does your group have a set of bylaws?
  * If yes:

    * Are they written down (ask for copy)
    * How closely does this organization follow the bylaws?
    * Are they helpful?

* If no:
    * How does this organization operate?

Part E. NETWORKING

* Does your organization work or communicate with groups like yours in other communities?

* If yes:
    * What advantages are there in this? disadvantages?

    * How does the communication take place? (telephone, mail, meetings, email, fax)

* Of the community development groups you are familiar with which is the most successful? why?

* What are some things you would like to know about other community development groups?

Part F. ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

* Does your organization receive formal or informal assistance (eg. workshops, online help service) from government agencies/offices (state, county, or regional: eg. Department of Commerce, North Regional RC&D, Bitterroot RC&D)? Please list.

* If yes:
    * Has the information been useful?

    * What steps have you taken to obtain this information (mail, computer, phone)?

    * Was the information hard to get?

    * If yes:
        * What could be changed to improve access to the services?

* What other information would be beneficial?

* Does your organization receive formal or informal assistance from institutions or private sources (eg. University of Montana, WEDGo)?

    * Please list

    * If yes:
        * Has this information been useful?

* What steps have been taken to obtain this information (mail, computer, phone)?

    * Was the information hard to get?
    * If yes:
        * What could be changed to improve access to the services?

Part G. FUNDING

* Is your group funded in any way (grants, donations, etc.)?

* If yes:
    * Where do you receive your funding from (grants, etc.)?

    * Have you reapplied for any grants?

* What advice would you offer other community groups in search of funding?

* What is your approximate annual budget? (copy?)

Part H. ACHIEVEMENTS

* What are this organization's most important achievements? (what goals have been achieved)

* What kind of strategies has this group used to accomplishits goals? (public hearings, meetings with local government,use of a facilitator) In other words, what makes this groupsuccessful?

* What goals have not been met? Why?

Part I. CONCLUSION

* What problems have you encountered in running this organization (that haven't already mentioned)? (lack of funding, lack of interest, interpersonal conflicts)

* Have you overcome them?

* Can you think of anything else to add that would help me better understand this community development group?

THANK YOU!!!!

APPENDIX B. written survey

The University of Montana
School of Forestry
SURVEY OF RURAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on your own opinions and experiences. This survey is anonymous so please don't put your name on it. A space is provided for the name of your community group.

Put an X in the appropriate box or fill in the blank. At the end of the questionnaire there will be space provided for written comments.

Name of community group_____

Part A. First I would like to ask you about what problems are present in your community, and how serious they are.

1. The following problems are sometimes found in rural communities, please rate them according to how serious a problem they are in your community:

	Very Serious	Somewhat Serious	Not Very Serious	NotSerious At All	Unsure
Lack of good employment opportunities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Lack of quality health care	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Lack of strategy for dealing with rapid population increase	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Inability of local work force to find affordable housing	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Rapid conversion of open space in to developed conditions	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Rising property taxes	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Insufficient natural resource base for employment opportunities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Insufficient natural resource base for recreational opportunities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

2. What is the most serious problem or issue facing this community?

Part B. Next I would like to ask you about the success of this community group. Please reply as objectively as possible.

3. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your community group:

	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Disagree
This group is very successful in dealing with the community's problems	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

This group is very successful in representing a diversity of ideas in the community	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
This group is very successful in influencing local government	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
This group has a well defined mission or vision statement	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
This group has a clear decision making process for accomplishing tasks	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Personally I think this group does a good job	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

4. What are the three most important reasons why this community group is successful in accomplishing its goals? (please list)

5. What are the three most important reasons why this community group is not successful in accomplishing its goals? (please list)

Part C. Next I would like to ask you about your participation in this community group.

6. What is your role or title in this organization (eg. member, treasurer,vice-president)?_____

7. How long have you been a member of this group? years____ months____

8. Below is a list of possible reasons you may of had for joining this community group. Please put an X in front of all the reasons that were important to you.

[ ] To solve a specific problem or accomplish a specific task, eg. to build a new school (please specify)

_____

[ ] For personal reasons, eg. friendship, praise, self esteem

[ ] To improve the welfare of the community in general

[ ] Concern for the local environment

[ ] Other (please specify)

_____

9. Looking at the list above, please go back and circle the box in front of the reason that was most important.

10. How often do you attend meetings of this group?
[ ] I attend all of the meetings
[ ] I attend three out of four meetings
[ ] I attend half the meetings
[ ] I attend one out of four meetings
[ ] I rarely attend meetings

11. How much time per week do you devote to this group, not counting time spent in the regular meetings?
[ ] None
[ ] Less than 1 hour
[ ] 1 or 2 hours
[ ] 3 or 4 hours
[ ] 5 or 6 hours
[ ] Other_____

12. Below is a list of possible reasons why someone might leave a community group. Please put an X in front of all of the reasons why you might leave this group.
[ ] It requires too much time
[ ] Lack of interest
[ ] Group does not accomplish it's goals
[ ] I disagree with the mission or vision of this group
[ ] There isn't enough money to operate with
[ ] Lack of good leadership
[ ] Personality conflicts with other group members
[ ] I would not leave this organization
[ ] Other (please specify)
_____

13. Looking at the list above, circle the box in front of the most important reason.

14. How many other organizations do you belong to that deal with the overall quality of the community (eg. Chamber of Commerce, Planning Board, Development Corporation)?
[ ] None
[ ] One
[ ] Two
[ ] Three
[ ] Four or more

Part D. Finally, I would like to ask a few questions about yourself.

15. What is your age?____

16. What is your sex?

[ ] Male
[ ] Female

17. How long have you lived in this community? Years_____
Months_____

18. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
[ ] Attended grade school
[ ] Some high school
[ ] Graduated from high school
[ ] Some college or vo-tech after high school
[ ] Graduated from college
[ ] Advanced degree (M.S., Ph.D., etc.)

19. What is your occupational status?
[ ] Currently unemployed, looking for work
[ ] Employed
[ ] Retired
[ ] Homemaker

20. In what economic sector do (or did) you work? (please select only one)
[ ] Agriculture (including ranching)
[ ] Timber/wood products
[ ] Mining
[ ] Recreation/tourism
[ ] Manufacturing
[ ] Construction
[ ] Transportation (trucking, railroads...)
[ ] Finance, insurance, real estate
[ ] Retail trade
[ ] Education
[ ] Public administration
[ ] Health care
[ ] Homemaking
Other_____

24. What is your approximate annual income?
[ ] Less than $5,000
[ ] $5,000 to $14,999
[ ] $15,000 to $24,999
[ ] $25,000 to $34,999
[ ] $35,000 to $44,999
[ ] $45,000 to $54,999
[ ] $55,000 to $64,999
[ ] $65,000 or more

25. Are there any comments or suggestions you wish to add?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!